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Grade 8
First Place

To be honest with you, I have never in my life had a good friend of an opposite “race”. It’s hard to get the opportunity to expand my knowledge of other races and individuals, because in a school that is primarily white, I’ve only had one black person my class out of my 11 years of schooling. He was always looked upon as “the different one,” and no one really took the time to get to know him. Needless to say, he changed schools within a year. Looking back, I came to realize that racism and judging others can begin at a very young age; we were only in third grade.

To write about what I can do to model Martin Luther King Jr., I feel as if I need to get all the background information on him that I possibly can. But then I remember one thing that really cast him out from others- his ability to be non judgmental towards other people, a quality that many Americans find they are lacking today.

At this stage in my life, it is very important for me to choose a high school that is suitable for my standards. By that I mean education, but to others it means, “How many blacks go there?” or “Isn’t it in a bad section of town?” What a horrible way to judge your future, just by the people who go there. The school I am basing my decision on has, in fact, many different kinds of people in every race. Am I ready to face the change that is awaiting me?

I hope to be able to increase my friendships with other people once I get into a new environment. Maybe I’ll be the first one to say hello to someone I’ve never met before. Whatever way I find, I’ll be sure to try and be a peacemaker, just as Martin Luther King Jr. was.

(Katelyn Golda continued)

I'm determined to make a lasting impression of my beliefs to all those who cross my path. I'll strive to be known as a friendly and loving individual. I hope that one day in my life I will come to know what it means to be a friend to all people, of every religion, race, and origin. We should all try to accept everyone into this world, and believe in the quote that makes Martin Luther King the famous man that he is today.

"I have a dream, that one day, this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal.'"